

# The Vision

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## Middle Eastern Legislative Night

On March 15, 2012, the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs (GCMEAA) joined with the Middle East American Chamber of Commerce (MECC) to co-host the Middle East American Legislative Night for the first time. The event was supported by both Muslim and Jewish groups and represented the larger Middle Eastern community; Members of the Muslim, Jewish and Christian faiths were in attendance. An estimated 300 people were present and the room was quickly filled to standing room.

"It was great to see so many people come out for an event like this. There were representatives from different Middle Eastern countries, religions, and organizations. It's inspiring to see such a diverse group working together," said Israel Patoka, Executive Director of the Governor's

Office of Community Initiatives.

The event was held in the Miller Senate Building in Annapolis and it was attended by Governor Martin O'Malley, who addressed the audience. White House Deputy Director of the Office of Public Engagement and Assistant to the President Mike Straughtmanis, Chair of the GCMEAA Anwer Hasan, Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown, and Maryland Senator, and event sponsor, Jim Rosapepe were also present and gave remarks. Some of the speakers discussed their legislative agendas, but the speeches also discussed diversity and Maryland's role in the world. They also celebrated the dedication of the Middle Eastern Community to promoting and strengthening the Maryland community and for preventing events in the Middle East from controlling events in Maryland.

After the speeches, the representatives, guests and attendees networked and discussed Maryland legislation. "Events like this one are great for facilitating dialogue; not just about issues in the Middle East but about issues that are important to everyone in Maryland," said Chair Anwer Hasan.

In addition to the speakers, representatives from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Jordan and the Embassy of Pakistan were in attendance. Maryland Secretary of State John McDonough, Interim State Superintendent of Schools Bernard Sadusky, Interim Maryland Secretary of Higher Education Danette Howard, Adjutant General Major General James A. Adkins, Maryland Secretary of Planning Richard Hall, Maryland Secretary of the Environment Robert Summers and Maryland Secretary of Juvenile Services Sam Abed were also present. Numerous members of the Maryland General Assembly, both Senators and Delegates were there, as were representatives from GCMEAA and MECC.

The event was also sponsored by the Islamic Center of Maryland, the Maryland-Israel Development Center, the Baltimore Jewish Council, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Frederick County Muslim Council, Dar-al-Taqwa, Howard County Muslim Council, Idara-e-Jaferia, and the An-Nur Foundation.



**Assistant Director of the Maryland Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs, Iman Awad, speaks at the Middle East American Legislative Night.**

## 2012 Maryland Asian American Business Conference



The Asian American Business Community in Maryland is gearing up for another great Asian American Business Conference (AABC). The sixth annual Maryland Asian American Business Conference will be held May 22nd, 2012 at The Universities at Shady Grove (9630 Gudelsky Drive, Building II, Rockville, MD) from 8AM until 7PM.

"Maryland's Asian American Business Conference is an incredible opportunity for all members of the business community to network and learn innovative ways to grow their companies," said Yi Shen, Assistant Director of the Governor's Commission on Asian American Affairs and member of the AABC planning committee. The Asian American Business Conference is an initiative of the Governor's Commission on Asian American Affairs.

As it has in previous years, the conference will feature keynote speakers, such as the new Secretary for Minority Affairs, Zenita Hurley, the Assistant Secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Enterprise Development (DBED) Bob Walker, and workshops on a variety of topics.

This year's workshops will include:

- ◆ **Maryland State Tax Credits for Businesses** (Panelists: Mark Vulcan, Director, Business Tax Credits)
- ◆ **Legal Workshop: Critical Business Issues for Early Stage Companies** (Panelists: Don Rogers; Bob Canter; Danny Krakower; and Simon Nadler: Partners, Shulman Rodgers)
- ◆ **State Procurement and Minority Business Certification** (Panelists: Alison Tavik, Maryland Department of Transportation and Yu Ryan, President, Daly Computers)
- ◆ **Going Global: Programs to assist your Business Internationally** (Panelists: Signe Pringle, Director, International Programs, DBED; Mike Violette, Washington Laboratories; and Alex Koff, Managing Partner, Whiteman, Taylor Preston Law)
- ◆ **Finding, Training, and Keeping Qualified Employees** (Maryland Grants and Resources)
- ◆ **Successful Marketing to the Federal Government** (Panelists: Charina Chapman, Training and Marketing Specialist, PTAP)
- ◆ **Identifying Sources of Financing** (working capital, expansions & acquisitions) (Panelist: Saule Miller, CITIBANK)
- ◆ **Maryland's Business Growth: County Officials Share Economic Development Plans** (Panelists: Lily Qi, Special Projects Manager, Montgomery County; and Kim Clark, Executive Vice President, Baltimore Development Corp.)

For more information about the conference, or if you are interested in attending, sponsoring, or participating as an exhibitor in the tradeshow, please visit the [website](#).

## DREAM Act Night

The Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs (GCHA) is held their second commission meeting of 2012 on April 18th. The main focus of this Commission meeting is the DREAM Act. Invite speakers will discuss current Maryland DREAM Act efforts.

The DREAM Act would provide a path to college enrollment, enlistment in the US Military, and naturalized US Citizenship for undocumented immigrants who have been living in the US since they were minors (fifteen years old or younger). There are several restrictions,

which limit who is eligible, including age and educational restrictions, as well as the provision that those who are eligible must have lived in the US for at least five years prior to the signing of the Act. In addition, only people who have maintained a "good moral character" during their residency in the US are eligible. The Federal version of the DREAM Act enjoys support from multiple education groups and the military, and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Act would raise government revenues.

The [Immigration Policy Center](#) (the research branch of the American Immigration Council) argues that, "caught in a system where there is little, if any, means for legalizing their status, smart, hard-working kids face an uncertain future because of their inability to continue their education, work, or join the military. ... A generation of young people caught between worlds has grown up without legal status. The loss of potential, productivity, and hope for these individuals is also a loss for this country."

## Commissioner Corner! Mr. Guy Wells

Mr. Guy Wells has been involved with the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) since the early 2000s, and a commissioner since 2005. "I wanted to help the Native American community and to be involved. I wanted to work on issues that affect the whole community," explained Mr. Wells. "Service to the community is very important for Native People."

One of the main issues that Mr. Wells has worked on during his time with the Commission was State Recognition of the Piscataway Tribal groups, which was finally achieved in January of 2012. "It's a long process and a huge step. It isn't just something that just happens overnight," explained Mr. Wells. The commitment of the Commission, the Native Communities, and their work together brought this about. He went on to say that since the recognition of the Piscataway Tribal groups, the Commission is working with an advisory council made up of Maryland agencies to help the community develop goals and plans for issues such as business development, housing, and health. Some of these issues the Commission is already working on, but the Commission is also constantly looking forward and developing goals for the future.

One of the Commissions projects has the Commission working with the Maryland Board of Education to compile information about the history of indigenous Maryland Tribes, which would be available to the community and

Maryland Public schools. This data could then be used by teachers who are teaching about Native American tribes, so they may inform their students about Local Maryland Tribes heritage and history instead of focusing on non-indigenous groups.

A native Marylander whose ancestors come from the Cherokee and the Yuchi Tribes, Mr. Wells grew up in Northeast Maryland and he now lives on the Eastern Shore. Mr. Wells worked for the Maryland Department of Natural



Photo of Mr. Guy Wells

Resources as a conservation officer for 27 years before retiring. He now does contractual work for the Maryland Department of Agriculture, for whom he collect field data about the crops that are being grown on the Eastern Shore.

Since his retirement, Mr. Wells teaches classes about the traditional culture of local Native American Tribes. He teaches these classes by drawing upon his life-long study of the culture of the Eastern Woodland tribal groups starting from the tribes' early contact

with Europeans in the 17th and 18th centuries. He particularly focuses on the material culture of these groups, looking at topics, such as traditional clothing, flint napping, and weaving. He also does historical research into issues such as materials that would have been available and used by local tribal groups.

"I teach [these classes] because I love it," said Mr. Wells, "and I want to be a resource." Mr. Wells also mentioned that his goal is to make the lessons enjoyable, and not just another history lesson. Mr. Wells does not only teach these lessons for the benefit of the Native American community, but often the goal of his classes is to educate other demographic groups. He hopes that his lessons can show people that indigenous Maryland tribes are still present in Maryland. "It's an education process. When you're talking about Eastern Tribal people, a lot of the general public are taught that Eastern Native American Tribes are gone. It's hard to get through what's taught in the mainstream. People just stop listening," Mr. Wells continued.

"I think in the future, we should look at the community itself. It's important to maintain the culture while moving forward into the 21st century." Although he feels that most of the community is doing a superb job keeping people interested in their traditional culture, "we now live in such a diverse culture, with exposure to many other aspects. It can be difficult. The key is education and making programs available."

## DREAM Act Night (Continued from Page 2)

The GCHA hopes to host speakers who are involved with the Maryland Education system, the Governor's administration, and Economic Development to examine the issue and its impact on the State; including efforts now in progress to help impulse economic development and broaden educational opportunities for all Marylanders. This event "signaled the number one priority that the commission will undertake this year," stated Jessy Mejia, Assistant Director of the GCHA.

In addition, members of other

Maryland Communities and members of the Governor's Ethnic Commission were in attendance. The Commission inspired discussion, spread information, and built bridges between the different Maryland communities.

"The DREAM Act is not an immigration issue. The DREAM Act isn't taking anything away from anyone, and neither is it a subsidy for anyone from the State. It is ensuring that students and veterans, who pay in-state taxes, and have gone through the Maryland public school system, are allowed to pay in-

state tuition. It is an education issue and an economic development issue. It is ensuring that Maryland has the most educated workforce," explained Assistant Director Mejia. "We hope to raise awareness about this issue and we hope that members of the other Governor's Commissions will join us."

The Commission meeting and DREAM Act night were held in the Montgomery College. For more information, please contact Jessy Mejia ([jmejia@goci.state.md.us](mailto:jmejia@goci.state.md.us)).

## Commissioners Testify on Behalf of Maryland Legislation

The Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs testified on behalf of several bills that had been submitted during this year's Maryland legislative session. "We believe that as representatives of a growing population, we should have a voice in the legislative process. We chose not to entangle ourselves in all of the bills, just the ones that were most important to the Asian American community," stated Clarence Lam, Legislative Chair, Governor's Commission on Asian American Affairs.

Commissioners Yun Yang, Larry Shinagawa, Humberto Ho, and Elizabeth Chung all testified at the hearing for House Bill 1148

introduced by Delegate Susan Lee. This bill would require "the appointment of an interpreter for a victim or victim's

representative who is deaf or cannot readily understand or communicate the

spoken English language; [and] authorizing a victim or a victim's representative to apply for appointment of a specified interpreter".

Commissioner Ho also spoke on behalf of the Commission regarding Senate Bill 1041, which is essentially the Senate version of House Bill 1148.

The Commission decided to speak on behalf of House Bill 1148 and

judicial process, but if they cannot understand then they cannot be fully involved," stated Commissioner Humberto Ho.

Commissioners Shinagawa and Chung also testified as private individuals in favor of House Bill 1236, which would have required "State units that collect specified demographic data to use separate collection categories for

specified categories of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; requiring specified State units to use additional specified separate collection categories; requiring specified units to make specified data available to the public and to post specified data on the State unit's Web site beginning on July 1, 2013, and yearly thereafter".

House Bill 1148 has already passed, and Senate Bill 1041 has still not been voted on. While House Bill 1236

did not pass, it will be modified and possibly reintroduced next session.



*Assistant Director Yi Shen (fourth on right) and Commissioner Humberto Ho (second on right) stand with representatives from other organizations at the Senate Bill 1236 hearing.*

Senate Bill 1041, because "it is important that the victims are involved in the

## Governor's Commission on African Affairs: Legislative Wrap-Up

The Governor's Commission on African Affairs will have its next Commission meeting April 24th, 2012 from 6pm until 9pm. This meeting will act as a forum to talk about bills that were passed during the State of Maryland's 2012 Legislative session in Annapolis and how those bills will affect the African community of Maryland. The meeting will also focus on the follow-up from the African Summit that was held in Takoma Park in November, 2011. "After the November African Summit in which over 250 people attended, there was so much momentum and involvement. We don't want to lose that momentum," said Valentina Ukwuoma, Chair of the Governor's Commission on African Affairs.

This event will also be an opportunity for the African Community of Maryland to meet its legislators who will be in attendance and even discuss future legislative ideas that the African

Commission would like to work on in 2013. Issues and topics such as: limited-

***"After the November African Summit... there was so much momentum and involvement. We don't want to lose that momentum..."***

English proficiency plans, healthcare access, creating the first Africa Day in

Maryland, and supporting the in-State tuition referendum coming up in November will be presented as the African Commission's future agenda.

"Our goal is to look at the inroads, accomplishments and lessons we have learned this past legislative session to create the vision ahead," said Sarian Bouma, the Chair of Legislative Wrap-Up Planning Committee and member of the Governor's Commission on African Affairs. The Governor's Commission on African Affairs would also like to invite the Commissioners from the other Ethnic Commissions to join them for this Wrap-Up event.

The Commission meeting and Legislative Wrap-Up will be held at Howard County Miller Library (9421 Frederick Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042) from 6pm until 9pm. For more information, please contact the Commission at 410-767-7925 or by e-mailing African@goci.state.md.us.



## Innovations in Aging 2012

This May, the Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA), the Virginia Department for the Aging, and the District of Columbia Office on Aging are coming together to convene the first regional conference on aging issues. This conference, titled *Innovations in Aging 2012*, will be held from May 3 through May 5, 2012 at The Gaylord National Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland (201 Waterfront Street, National Harbor, MD, 20745).

The convention is aimed at older adults, Baby Boomers, caregivers, professionals who manage the care of aging individuals, and anyone else with an interest in aging issues. There are free events happening on Thursday (the 3rd) and Saturday (the 5th). Check out "Expo Information" for more information on

the free programs on the Innovations on Aging website:

[www.InnovationsinAging2012.com](http://www.InnovationsinAging2012.com).



The purpose of the Conference is to showcase new directions for aging policy, programs, and services that promote healthy community and lifelong healthy habits. Free screenings will be provided, and there will be cooking and fitness demonstrations, music, educational and professional training sessions, a job fair, and many other

activities. The conference will also showcase new technology and innovative approaches to plan for the future and prepare to age well.

"Longevity is the greatest phenomenon of our time," according to Gloria Lawlah, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging. "Every day, 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 65."

The Conference is being planned with assistance from the AARP and the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD). The Community Foundation of the National Capital Region is also providing assistance. For more information, visit [Innovations in Aging 2012 conference website](http://www.InnovationsinAging2012.com). Questions can be directed to the Maryland Department of Aging at 410-767-1100.

## Managing for Results: A new look at the responsibilities of the Governor's Ethnic Commissions

Special Article by Elizabeth Hines,  
Director, Governor's Commissions

At the 2011 Joint Commission Assembly in December, the charrette gave the Ethnic Commissioners and staff a very good sense of what is working and what is not when it comes to the Governor's Ethnic Commissions. As indicated in the Feb-March *The Vision* newsletter, many of you want to collaborate more on initiatives together and do more outreach to your respective

Commissioners are not doing enough.

In addition for Commissioners wanting to "do more" (which we loved hearing), I'm not sure if all Commissioners are aware, but there is also an annual *Managing For Results* Report that comes out of all the activities, initiatives, and Commission meetings that is due to the Department of Budget and Management every August. Each year, DBM asks each Commission to do more initiatives and provide more resources to the communities.

Given the feedback we

are looking for commissioners to be doing and where they are with their initiatives and goals.

I want to now share with you the year to date MFR report of the commissions through March (see chart below). This, coupled with an individualized look at the Commission's goals will give Commissions and Commissioners a really good sense of their accomplishments (the Commission subcommittees should be meeting in April -if you haven't had a meeting already- to discuss the goals for the year).

Commission Name	AFRICAN AFFAIRS	ASIAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC AFFAIRS	NATIVE AMERICAN	MIDDLE EASTERN AMERICAN
MRF Goals FY 2012	4	10	13	12	6
TOTAL YTD:	3	12	16	16	9

[Click on the picture to see the full chart.](#)

communities. However, underlying all those comments were comments of accountability and wanting to see and know the "progress" they are making as Commissioners. Commissioner "fatigue" does not seem to come from doing too much, but from feeling that

received from the charrette, coupled with a stronger look at our annual "Managing for Results" report, the staff of the ethnic commissions have complied the following Commission-wide and individual commissioner check list to make sure commissioners know what we

All of you should be very proud of what you've achieved so far. I am confident that we will meet all of our MFR goals by June 30<sup>th</sup> (the end of our Fiscal Year). I'm also going to need your input for 2013! So start thinking ahead to the Fall of 2012 and Spring of 2013.

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**Governor's Office of Community Initiatives and the Ethnic Commissions**

The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives coordinates outreach efforts to various programs and groups, including the ethnic communities across Maryland. The Governor has also appointed members to the following ethnic commissions: the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, the Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs, the Maryland Commission on African Affairs, and the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs.

The ethnic commissions were created to assist Maryland State government in responding effectively to the needs and concerns of the various ethnic communities in Maryland. The commissioners on each ethnic commission act as liaisons between the State government and their communities. They raise awareness of issues facing ethnic populations, as well as promoting State-wide initiatives to their community. The Commissions are also tasked with initiating and supporting programs and activities to promote the political, social, cultural, educational, business and health interests of their communities.

**April-May Events**

**Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs:**

Commission Meeting/DREAM Act Night

April 18, 2012 (5pm-7pm)

Montgomery College

Montgomery County

**Governor's Commission on African Affairs:**

Commission Meeting/Legislative

Wrap-Up Night

April 24, 2012 (6pm-9pm)

Howard County Miller Library

9421 Frederick Road

Ellicott City, MD 21042

**Asian American Heritage Month Celebration**

May 12, 2012 (1pm-9pm)

Baker Park

Frederick County

**Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific**

**American Affairs:** Commission Meeting

May 15, 2012 (6:00pm-9pm)

629 North Market St.

Frederick MD 21701

**Asian American Business Conference:**

May 22, 2012 (8a.m.-6p.m.)

Location: Universities of Shady Grove

9630 Gudelsky Drive

Building II, Rockville, MD



**Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs:**

Commission Meeting

May 31, 2012 (6pm-9pm)

If you would like to submit an announcement to post, please email it to:  
[ehines@goci.state.md.us](mailto:ehines@goci.state.md.us)

Every announcement must contain a date, title, location, time, phone number or website. We reserve the right to edit or delete any submissions.

